If the current census figures are accepted there is apparently a cause for considerable concern. The individual share of the available grazing land has been reduced to 0.5 hectares. They have to share it with a variety of ungulates. For the survival of viable population they need more area than the total of the individual shares. This sanctuary is susceptible to seasonal variations and the Blackbuck faces food shortage in the dry season as described above and the condition in the rainy season deteriorates further as during this season they are deprived of most of their feeding grounds as these areas are filled with brackish water. They are then compelled to take shelter in the unflooded patches and the jungle, where food is scarce for them and the seashore, where the vegetation comprises mainly of the succulent plants, *Salicornia brachiata* Roxb. and *Suaeda maritima* Dumort, the preference of Blackbuck towards these is the least. Naturally this situation drastically changes their biological and behavioural activities. Such a large population will find it difficult to survive in this circumscribed ecological regime with extremely limited food and space for movement. This may lead to a steep decline in the population and bring down the genetic quality of the stock, if not their total disappearance from this sanctuary. Proper management techniques should be applied so that the biotic, edaphic and climatic factors of this ecosystem can remain in dynamic equilibrium, with respect to the Blackbuck. Introduction of this unique endemic antelope of the Indian plains, from this sanctuary to other similar habitats also can be tried.

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7. A SIGHTING OF A LARGE DHOLE PACK IN KANYAKUMARI DISTRICT, TAMILNADU

In the first week of April, 1982 while going in a jeep through coupe VIII of a rubber plantation in Keeriparai Division, Kanyakumari District a pack of dholes (*Cuon alpinus*) was seen. The time was around 1600 hrs. and I counted 28 dholes before the pack entered the adjoining tropical moist deciduous forests with dense undergrowth. The pack had some pups and as the distance between the leading and the last dhole was around

200 m. I could not exactly differentiate the pups from the adults.

The forests of this division still have sambar (*Cervus unicolor*), wild pigs (*Sus scrofa*) and mouse-deer (*Tragulus meminna*). In addition, numerous domestic cattle graze in these forests. Earlier, while working in Kalakad Wildlife Sanctuary as Wild Life Warden in 1977, I have seen 26 dholes. Johnsingh (per. comm.) reports that the maximum number of dholes, he saw in Bandipur was 18, and he attributes this to the size of the common prey. Chital (*Axis axis*) which is one third of the size of the sambar. If prey size determine pack size, the larger packs seen in Kalakad and Keeriparai could be attributed to the common prey, the sambar.

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OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF
FORESTS, MADRAS - 600 006,
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8. PINKFOOTED SHEARWATER [*PROCELLARIA CARNEIPES* (GOULD)] IN INDIA

On 19th May 1979, one of us (R.B.G.) was at Kanyakumari at the southernmost tip of India, when he saw some fisher boys on the shore offering for sale six petrels which they had caught on fish-hooks a few miles out at sea. Two of these were purchased, skinned and added to the Society's collection, but though correctly identified as the Pinkfooted Shearwater [*Procellaria carneipes* (Gould)] the record was inadvertantly not published at the time.

INDIAN HANDBOOK (1, p. 11) refers to two examples taken in Ceylon, one in 1879 and the other in 1945 as the only records from our area. Subsequent to this, small numbers were observed by W.W.A. Phillips in Equatorial Channel in the southernmost Maldives in early July (*JBNHS* 55, p. 216) and Strickland and Jenner (*JBNHS* 74, p. 490) in Birds of Addu Atoll (southernmost portion of the Maldives, south of the Equator) say "Probably mainly a passage migrant. Noted March — May 1958 and 16th-20th October 1975, but hundreds of birds passed close inshore".

Bourne (1960) in *Sea Swallow* (13 p. 26) Petrels of the Indian Ocean says "northward movement starts during May and birds are seen flying northwest reaching the vicinity of Java, Ceylon, and south coast of Arabia by mid-summer — concentrate off Arabian coast in late summer and return in September, when numbers have been seen off Cochin".

There is also a sight record at 08°16′N, 69°15′E on 4th August — A. S. Cheke, *Ibis* 1969, p. 628.

There are really few records from Indian limits and the two specimens referred to above apart from adding a new species to the Bombay collection may be worth publishing. They are both males and their wings are 308 and 322 mm., (*vs.* 299 to 316 in Ind. Hb. reproduced from Stuart Baker's *Fauna* 6:305) bill 42-42.5 (41-46), tarsus 42, 42 (about 52 to 56) and tails 101, 107 (137 to 148). The tails, it will be noticed, are appreciably shorter than recorded.